

Prayers and Reflections for September

The Pope's Monthly Intention

That politicians, scientists and economists work together to protect the world's seas and oceans



Care for the Earth

In the Judaeo-Christian tradition, the word 'creation' has a broader meaning than 'nature', for it has to do with God's loving plan in which every creature has its own value and significance. Nature is usually seen as a system which can be studied, understood and controlled, whereas creation can only be understood as a gift from the outstretched hand of the Father of us all, and as a reality illuminated by the love which calls us together into universal communion [...]

At the same time, Judaeo-Christian thought demythologised nature. While continuing to admire its grandeur and immensity, it no longer saw nature as divine ... If we acknowledge the value and fragility of nature and, at the same time, our God-given abilities, we can finally leave behind the modern myth of unlimited material progress. A fragile world, entrusted by God to human care, challenges us to devise intelligent ways of directing, developing and limiting our power.

Pope Francis, *Laudato Si'*, 76, 78



Male and Female: The Human Ecology

The crisis in the family has produced a crisis of human ecology, for social environments, like natural environments, need protection. And although the human race



Adam and Eve, by Jacob Jordaens

has come to understand the need to address conditions that menace our natural environments, we have been slower to recognize that our fragile social environments are under threat as well, slower in our culture, and also in our Catholic Church. It is therefore essential that we foster a new human ecology and advance it. It is necessary first to promote the fundamental pillars that govern a nation: its nonmaterial goods. The family is the foundation of coexistence and a guarantee against social fragmentation.

Pope Francis, *Humanum: An International Colloquium on the Complementarity of Man and Woman*, Rome, 2014



When What We've Lost is the Run of Ourselves: A Prayer to St Anthony



Photo: iStockphoto.com

We pray to St Anthony to find things that we've lost – keys, lottery tickets, mobile phones ... the list is endless. Let us ask St Anthony to help us find our lost faith, our lost enthusiasm, our lost hope, the loss of innocence in children, the lost centrality of prayer, the lost respect for life, the lost graces we resist, our lost sense of the need of God, our lost opportunities to forgive and to receive forgiveness.

May St Anthony help us to recover our lost Fruits of the Holy Spirit: our lost love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, truthfulness, gentleness and self-control. May he help us also to find our lost Gifts of the Holy Spirit: our lost wisdom, understanding, courage, knowledge, right-judgement, wonder and awe in God's presence.

Let us pray also for people who are missing. May God be with them and with their families in their unspeakable anguish.

We pray for families who have lost a child in infancy, through stillbirth or miscarriage. May they find peace.

May the intercession of St Anthony prevent us from losing the run of ourselves through the pretence, nonsense, illusion and shallow superficiality that offer empty promises of passing happiness.

Fr John Cullen Sacred Heart Parish, Roscommon



Preparation for the Homily

'Preparation for preaching is so important a task that a prolonged time of study, prayer, reflection and pastoral creativity should be devoted to it' (*Evangelii Gaudium* 145). Pope Francis emphasises this admonition with very strong words: a preacher who does not prepare himself and who does not pray is 'dishonest and irresponsible' (*EG* 145), 'a false prophet, a fraud, a shallow impostor' (*EG* 151). Clearly, in the preparation of homilies, study is invaluable, but prayer is essential. The homily will be delivered in a context of prayer, and it should be composed in a context of prayer.

Homiletic Directory, 26

